

Journaling to relieve stress

“If life is worth living it is worth writing down”

Often dismissed as old-fashioned and too time-consuming, journaling has taken on a newfound interest among those who teach stress reduction techniques. The State University of New York at Stony Brook studied the value of journaling as a form of stress reduction with patients having asthma and rheumatoid arthritis. After four months, the researchers found clinically relevant improvements in disease activity. If you are seeking ways to reduce stress, then 15 minutes of journaling a day is a good place to start.

- Find a journal that is lined and can lay flat and has a solid spine, so you can write easily. Be sure the size is easy to carry with you, in a purse or backpack.
- Commit to a specific time and day i.e. end of day, first thing upon waking, after exercise.
- As you become more sophisticated, you might spend 10 min. reviewing the week of journal comments and capture key behaviors that contributed to your success the past week.
- Be brief; consider using bullet points. As you become more adept at journaling, you will find it's less about grammar and composition than it is about:
 - Things I did well today
 - Why things went well
- Evaluate your stress level every day.
- Note any important feelings or emotions